

# Television and the construction of a public image of immigration

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- *This article aims to be a general introduction to the theme of the present double issue of Quaderns del CAC devoted to the study of television as a narrator and central constructor of the public image of immigration in Spanish and Catalan society. After locating the sociodemographic context of the immigration currents in Spain, the article summarises the status of international research on the role of television in the process of creating a public agenda and defining social problems and, in particular, representing minorities and diversity. Next comes a short presentation of the different areas into which the issue was divided, centred on an analysis of the events in Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005, a study of the presence of immigration on the main television stations during the 2002-2003 season and the opportunities to access television programmes available to the immigration sectors.*

## Key words

Public image, television, immigration, public agenda, minority, diversity

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## 1. Television Searchlights that Illuminate the Obscurity

Television images have the virtue and the responsibility of connecting the viewer's experience with a time and place illuminated by the light of a camera. It was the master Walter Lippmann who taught us that the press (and by extension today, TV) is not a simple mirror of reality. The press, he wrote in 1922 (and television today, he would say), was "like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision". Into the public vision so the public, as Lippmann also said, could have a 'mental image' of the world it lives in.

How do these television searchlights move about in the capturing and presentation of immigration episodes in Spain? Which public image of the problem of immigration have television stations in Spain and Catalonia contributed to and are contributing to forming, probably decisively, in recent years?

On 6 October 2005, the searchlights of the main Spanish and international TV stations used their focuses, frames and reports to illuminate a charge by African immigrants at the Melilla fence, in which six immigrants were shot dead by the Moroccan police.

The impact of these images from Ceuta and Melilla catapulted the problems relating to immigration flows into Europe to the top of the public agenda, particularly immigration from Africa via the Spanish borders. If the events in Ceuta and Melilla led to serious questions about the immigration policies of the States involved, reports and footage of the events by the leading television stations also raised questions that are hard to answer.

It is precisely because of the importance that television has in the construction of a public image about the big issues of the day and because of the complexity of its analysis in particular cases, e.g., the reports of the events in Ceuta and

Melilla, that *Quaderns del CAC* thought it was a good time to dedicate an issue to the theme of immigration, examining in particular the presentation of the aforementioned events and more generally addressing TV's role in the representation of immigration problems. With this decision and this special issue on television and immigration, *Quaderns del CAC* continues to pay particular attention to the issue of immigration, which it already looked at with the publication of issue no. 12 (January-April 2002) dedicated to media and immigration.

## 2. Migration Currents that Pressure the Border Fences

The growing flow of immigrants from around the world to the Iberian Peninsula is one of the new and big challenges Spain has had to face in recent years. Its position at the border of Europe, with extensive borderline zones with the countries of north and north-west Africa, has made the Spanish coasts, particularly around the Strait of Gibraltar (and the two autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla) and the Canary Islands into continual passageways and arrival points for African immigrants. The arrival of African immigrants via boats from the coasts of Africa grew considerably after year 2000. But, as the following table shows, and no doubt because of pressure from the Spanish authorities and the danger of crossing the Atlantic, the number of boats and

immigrants detected fell noticeably after 2004, and current migration currents are concentrated on border crossings into Ceuta and Melilla.

By late 2005, the regularised immigration phenomenon in Spain had acquired very similar dimensions to that of the other big States of Western Europe. According to figures published by the Secretariat of State for Immigration and Emigration, the total number of foreigners with a residence permit or authorisation in Spain at 30 September 2005 was 2,738,932, of which 780,841 were from the European Union. That means there were around two million regularised immigrants. According to the following three graphs provided by the abovementioned Secretariat of State, we can see at least three big trends: the preponderance of Latin America and Africa in the migration flows to Spain; the high proportion of some nationalities (e.g., Moroccans, Ecuadorians, Colombians and Rumanians, although there is a growing diversification) and the favourite destinations of immigrants, focused on four autonomous communities of the State (in order: Catalonia, Madrid, Valencia and Andalusia).

## 3. Relating Images, Explaining Conflicts, Modulating Voices

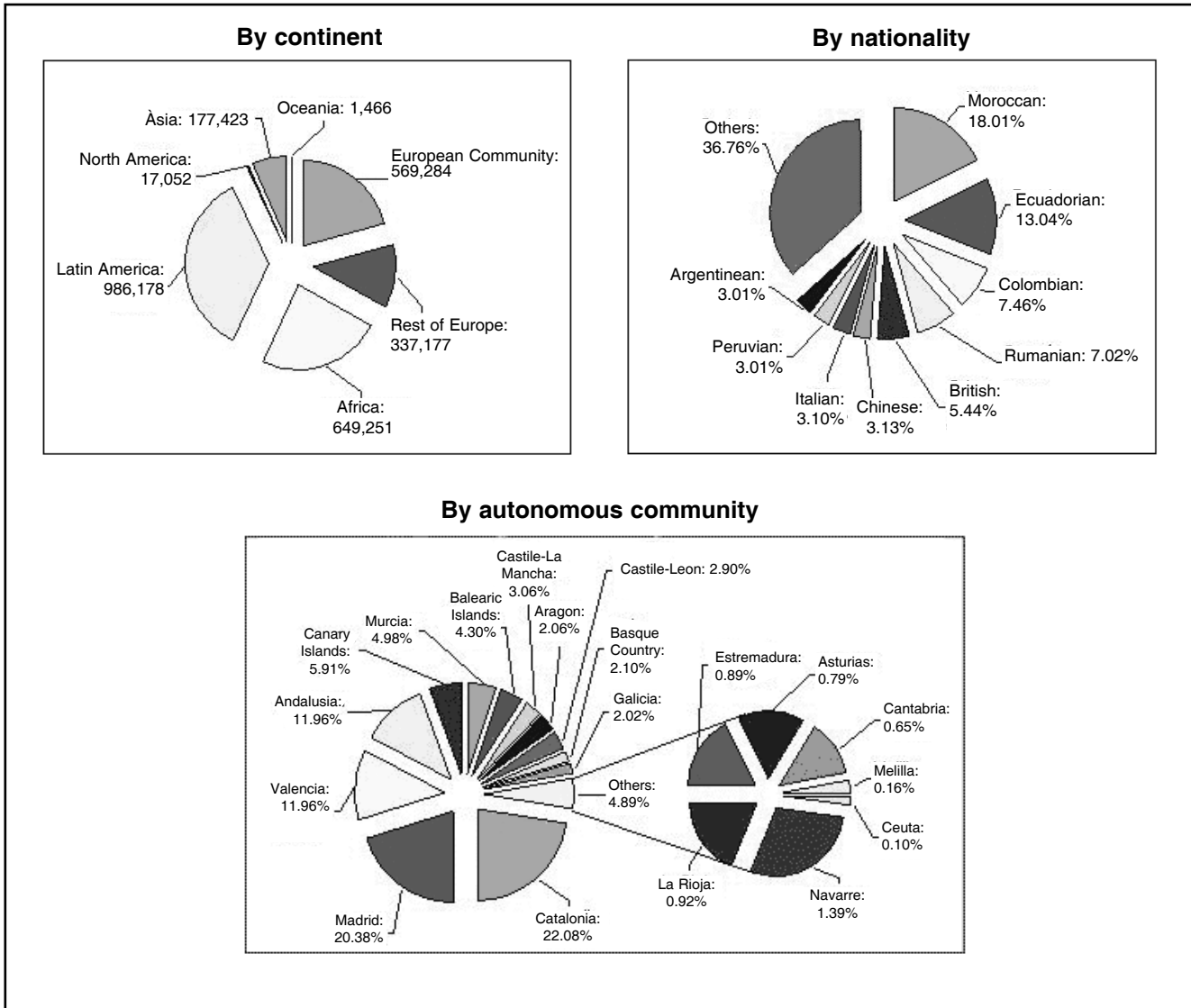
The central question to which this double issue of *Quaderns del CAC* aims to provide answers can be formulated

**Table 1. Irregular immigration to Spain in boats 1999-2005**

Year	Boats detected	Immigrants detained
1999	475	3,569
2000	807	15,195
2001	1,060	18,517
2002	1,020	16,670
2003	942	19,176
2004	740	15,675
2005	567	11,781

Source: Ministry for Work and Social Affairs

**Graph 1. Foreigners with a residence permit or authorisation in force at 31-12-06**



Source: Secretariat of State for Immigration and Emigration

as follows: How does television intervene in the definition of immigration as a public interest problem? And more specifically: How do programming policies and news routines at the main television stations in Spain impact the creation of the public image of immigration and its media visibility?

We started from the hypothesis that news reports on TV – and in particular on the leading stations at a particular time and place – together with the subsequent rewriting of news, fiction and entertainment, make up the nucleus of the discursive strategies with which television institutions are

positioned as social narrators and actors in this matter. Television stations tend to classify events and situations and to act this way as fundamental mediators when it comes to including particular events and assessments on and excluding them from the specific agenda of social problems that can be taken into consideration by public opinion and the political system. But the different stations, for reasons of their ideology or position on the television market, can hold different and even opposing positions in their respective proposals for defining a public problem of the

representation of the diverse conflicts surrounding immigration.

As a hegemonic media in the current mass culture and as confirmed in the empirical research, television exercises a decisive influence not just on the public perception of immigration problems but also on the processes of competition between the different social actors to define this problem and the public policies to apply. Television's influence on the public perception of particular problems has long warranted specific dedication in international research. There was, for example, the fundamental objective of certain schools, such as George Gerbner and collaborators' 'cultivation theory': one of the focuses of attention of this school was in fact the representation of minorities and the formation of stereotypes on American TV through various genres and formats<sup>1</sup>.

The relative novelty of immigration flows to Spain requires specific attention to assess the state of the dominant representations and be able to act on the basis of this knowledge. The media in general and television in particular are not by any means the only actors in the process of competing for the definition of immigration problems, but they are central to these processes. I have referred to the attention previously given by *Quaderns del CAC* in issue no. 12 (2002) to the treatment given by the media and institutions of Catalonia to the new problem of immigration. The contributions of that issue, together with pioneering conclusions and recommendations from the Parliament of Catalonia, the Catalonia Broadcasting Council and the Catalonia College of Journalists, as well as the research work and reflections of the collaborators listed in the bibliography to this work, constitute a reference block in the empirical and regulatory analysis of the always-complex relationship between the media and immigration<sup>2</sup>. Attention to the specific problem of the media's intervention in the representation of the facts of immigration has been the focus of various research works in Catalonia in recent years<sup>3</sup>, in an evident effort to connect with the interdisciplinary research done on this issue in different countries across Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The intervention of the mass media and particularly television in the establishment of public agendas and in the prioritisation and framing of major issues in the face of public opinion and other socio-political actors is unques-

tionable. In the particular framework of policy-making processes, television stations usually steer a competitive course between political actors in order to propose models for defining social problems and also to suggest political action strategies in all spheres (parties, governments, trade unions, public opinion, social movements, etc.).

Research inspired by theoretical and methodological premises of the 'agenda-setting' school provide study and analysis perspectives about the role of the media and news genres in the establishment and ownership of the big issues on the public agenda. In that regard, there is a certain consensus about the crucial role the media reserves in the news and the news discourse of current affairs for the incorporation of events/news in the reference frameworks of the issue in public debates at a given time and place. On the other hand, neither the discourse about television fiction genres itself nor that relating to the genres of spectacle and television entertainment, usually closely linked to values of newsworthiness, are usually approached by empirical studies. This shortage is a challenge for researchers to face, because while television continues to incorporate and exploit the current affairs background as raw material for fiction and spectacles, this set of genres and programmes becomes more interesting from the viewpoint of the social construction of an image of immigration. Consequently, included along with ideas more closely related to agenda setting, we have added studies of a narratological nature and textual analysis in order to approach the consideration of the non-news television genres.

#### **4. Select, Prioritise, Frame Stages and Characters**

As has been suggested, the multidisciplinary approach to the construction of a public image of immigration in Spain on the basis of the central role of television, which we are offering in this issue of *Quaderns*, is framed within a set of theoretical and methodological premises that I can only note here in brief.

Indeed, we are at the crossroads of diverse lines of theoretical research about the role of the media and its impact on the definition of public problems. On the one hand, there is a line that starts from the sociology of knowledge to propose the consideration of the media as a

central discursive instrument in the social construction of reality. This line of research, i.e., the study of news shows and the role of journalists and news companies in the processes of the selection (gate keeping), classification (news-worthiness) and definition (framing) of the contingent social reality has a solid tradition of reference results (e.g., Altheide 1976, Tuchman 1978, Gans 1979, Gitlin 1980, Graber 1980, Bennet 1983, etc.)<sup>5</sup>. There is also a realm of studies that approach television fiction and entertainment as a source of public knowledge of the social reality, which includes works that can be framed in the tradition of British cultural studies (largely promoted by the Birmingham School and institutions such as the British Film Institute) and the Italian school around the RAI, with its VQPT<sup>6</sup> service, as well as reports commissioned by the European Audiovisual Observatory and its support for the Eurofiction group, with the encouragement of the group and the well-known author Milly Buonanno<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, the orientation proceeding from political theory, and more specifically political communication, emphasises the media as a fundamental intermediary in the construction of public problems. In other words, the media constructs reference images about social conflicts and competes with other political actors in policy-making processes. These lines of research coincide as they attempt to define how social problems become public problems and which actors are more likely to impose a definition of the situation and guide alternative solutions to conflicts (e.g., Edelman 1971 and 1988, Gusfield 1981, Kingdon 1984, Paletz 1987, Best 1988, Ericson-Baranek-Chan 1989, etc.)<sup>8</sup>.

It is therefore taken for granted that the agenda defined by the media and the definition of a particular field of tensions and disputes as a public problem are intimately linked. That is what the research worked located in the tradition of agenda-setting tries to study empirically, especially following the innovative contributions of authors like Lyengar and Kinder, and the founder himself, McCombs<sup>9</sup>.

However, the object of attention we are focusing on here requires turning to other research traditions about the media discourse and in particular the television discourse. I am referring particularly to the complementation of the analysis on the basis of lines of interest such as narratology and discourse analysis. Narrative and discursive analyses stem from more superficial message levels to bring out the pro-

found structures of the content, which will end up becoming the outlines of the representation transmitted by the media.

Narrative and discursive analysis methods are applied to the diverse television languages and registers: static images and kinetic images, written text and audio text. At the same time, they study the issue of the narration, characters and action. Two traditions are of interest in this type of television analysis: the one which is framed in narrative semiotics and that concentrates on narrative structures and categories like narrative programmes, activators and actors, powers, space and time, etc., and the one which stems from the theory of the text and focuses on analysing a discourse on the basis of theoretical categories like semantic macrostructures, microstructures, superstructures, stereotypical comments, situation models, etc. The leading authors in these methods are respectively A. J. Greimas and T.V. Dijk<sup>10</sup>.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind the complementary processes of ethnographic research for delimiting the contexts of content production and content reception. There is no doubt that knowledge about the modalities and routines of constructing television stories and discourses relating to immigration (news, fiction or entertainment) contributes elements of great interest to the framing of the problem and the assessment of content. On the other hand, the ethnographic study of reception in particular publics of news and images about immigration, transmitted by television stations, would make it possible to know the nature and impact of the type of knowledge and of the attitudes felt by the media in relation to the new immigration flows. In the present issue of the *Quaderns*, these lines of work have been included only in terms of the two modalities of reception. As we will see further on, most of the studies focus on the perspective of content analysis and in particular on the consideration of television in two ways: as an autonomous narrator of social conflict and at the same time as an actor interested in a particular definition of immigration as a public problem.

## **5. Looking at the Events in Ceuta and Melilla from a Distance**

Four articles in this issue tackle the television treatment of the events in Ceuta and Melilla from different angles. We

understand “events in Ceuta and Melilla” to mean the different episodes that took place during approximately a week around the fences of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on Moroccan soil, in relation to the different attempts by African immigrants to clandestinely cross the Spanish border. In particular, there were two events that marked the start and end of the week: on Thursday 6 October 2005, six African immigrants were shot trying to scale the fence at Melilla, and on Wednesday 12 October the EU Luxemburg summit admitted there were around 30,000 African immigrants between Morocco and Algeria trying to enter Europe via the Spanish borders at Ceuta and Melilla.

How did the main Spanish TV stations report the “events in Ceuta and Melilla”? Immediately afterwards, the CAC, via the Round Table on Diversity, commissioned different groups of researchers in Catalonia to take an interdisciplinary approach to a study of the television information about the events. The first four articles in this issue are the result of that commission. The first two focus on analysing the content of the TV news shows in the sample supplied by the CAC, and the last two are reception studies with regards the information about the events.

The systematic description of the journalistic formats specific to television, via a textual and visual analysis and through the organisation and duration of the different sequences and appearances on the TV news, made it possible to compare the television intervention in general with that of each particular station with regards the dominant image of these events. This reconstruction work is the subject of the article by the MIGRACOM group from the UAB, made up of Bertran, Gutiérrez, Huertas, Lorite, Losa and Mateu; their work is entitled “The Audiovisual Treatment of the Events at the Ceuta and Melilla Fence: From a Sensationalist to a Humanitarian Vision”. The study takes into consideration the nightly news shows of the four highest-rating stations in Catalonia (TV3, TVE-1, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV). The research work highlights a number of interesting facts, such as the large degree of homogeneity of the images among the different stations, the tendency towards dramatisation and sensationalism and the preponderance of official news sources, both Moroccan and Spanish.

The approach to the image of immigration from an analysis

of the discourse of the TV news shows is dealt with in the article entitled “Delimited Solidarity: Study of the Television Coverage of the Events at the Melilla Fence in October 2005”, by the group composed of Giró, Jarque, López, Carrera, Castel and García from the Observatory for the News Coverage of Conflicts (OCC) at the UAB and the Centre for African Studies (CEA). The article holds that the television coverage of the events was at first alarmist and the immigrants waiting to enter Ceuta and Melilla were shown as a threat to Spain and Europe. However, later on, they were shown as victims of a breach of their rights by the Moroccan authorities. In terms of Spanish and European responsibility about the events, “it was either played down or ignored”.

The reception of the TV images and information about the events in Ceuta and Melilla are the object of attention from two different perspectives: the reception by a broad sample of African cultural communities resident in Catalonia and the way adolescents recalled the events, via a sample of students from five Barcelona schools.

The article about reception by the African immigration groups in Catalonia is entitled “Intersubjective and Intercultural Reading of the News Treatment of the Events in Ceuta and Melilla” and was carried out by the group made up of Botton, López, Male, C. Pulido, M.A. Pulido, Thiak and Tortajada from the CREA (Special Centre of Research in Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities) inter-university group. The work is framed in and vindicates an ambitious table of reception methodology. From theoretical and methodological premises about participative research, the article reveals the preliminary results of discussion groups involving seven immigrant communities resident in Catalonia<sup>11</sup>. Among the multiple conclusions of the study, in order to show the ‘preferred reading’ sensed by the stations, I would like to mention one here: that all the stations concentrated the news-worthiness of the events in the ‘conflict’ category, although some (TVE, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV) put it in the ‘political’ conflict category, while others (TV3 and La 2) understood it as a ‘social’ conflict and only TV3 contributed elements to explain the causes of the conflict.

The reception of the events and how they were recalled two or three months down the line by adolescents is the study objective taken up by Prats and Higuera from the

UB's Moral Education Research Group in the article entitled "Critical But Dependent: How Young People Interpret Television News (The Impact of the Events in Ceuta and Melilla)". The authors draw a number of disturbing conclusions from the realisation of audiovisual workshops, questionnaires and observations made with students aged 14 to 17 from five schools in Barcelona<sup>12</sup>. For example, they ask to what point the media contributes to the construction of images commonplace amongst the young with regards immigration, and whether it reinforces a partial and fragmented view of the immigration phenomenon.

## 6. Accessing Television Programmes with Difficulty

Beyond the events in Ceuta and Melilla, the key question in the equation between television and immigration is if and how the new migration flows to Spain and Europe, and the progressive settling of immigrant communities in Spain, have achieved a public visibility on the television stations, principally in the highest-rating ones. In other words, the interest of the research work, the open debate and public reflection in this field, is focused on how and to what extent the public and private stations' programming policies have incorporated the issues and the representation of immigration in their programming schedules.

A block of three articles in this issue of *Quaderns* presents some of the results of a research project funded as part of the General Knowledge Plan with the collaboration of the CAC on "Television and the Construction of a Public Image of Immigration in Spain"<sup>13</sup>. The basic research and the three articles have in common the analysis object of the 2002-2003 television season and a sample made up of the three highest-rating Spanish general-interest stations (TVE-1, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV) and the Catalan station TV3. The research work, developed by the UNICA (Audiovisual Communication Research Unit) group at the UPF, looked at the visibility and types of presence of immigration on news shows, fictional series and programming policies.

The first article in this block, "Television News and Access to the Public Agenda of Immigration Issues", carried out by the UNICA group made up of Gifreu, Corbella, Àubia and Suárez, studies how the main Spanish TV stations intervene in the processes of the selection and narration of immi-

gration-related conflicts through their news shows. It also attempts to prepare a specific methodology for monitoring and analysing television information on the problems of immigration. The results make it possible to detect, at least for the period examined, important deficiencies in the television coverage of immigration, as well as noticeable differences in the activity of each station as a selector and narrator of conflicts relating to the new migration flows to Spain.

The treatment of immigration in fiction series is a reality that has not been empirically studied very much. That is the aim of the article by the UNICA team made up of Ruiz, Ferrés, Obradors, Pujadas and Pérez, entitled "The Public Image of Immigration in Television Series". Applying an innovative and specific methodology in a sample period, in the framework of narrative semiotics, the group analysed how Spanish and Catalan television fiction affects the processes of creation of the collective social imagination and prototypes that influence the way of perceiving, thinking about and experiencing the social reality of immigrants and immigration. 41 plots from Spanish series were examined and 29 immigrant characters found from a total of 86 narrative roles exercised by immigrants. The work makes it possible to establish similarities and differences between the prototypical structures with relation to immigrants detected on the Spanish and Catalan stations.

Finally, the UNICA research also tackles the consideration of television stations as actors that intervene in the big decisions of whether or not to include immigration-related issues on programming schedules and formats. The team composed of Gómez, Capdevila and Pintor made this analysis and summed it up in the article entitled "Programming Strategies and Possible Places for the Construction of the Public Image of Immigration: The 2002/2003 Season in Catalonia". The analysis compared the four highest-rating stations in Catalonia (TVE-1, Tele-5, Antena 3 TV and TV3) and found important differences between the two public stations, and between them and the private ones: a strategy of silence on TVE-1, a noticeable presence on TV3 and options for fiction on Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV.

This look at the programming policies and schedules of the stations as a framework of opportunities of access by the figures and problems of immigration to the sphere of public

visibility is complemented by a further three articles devoted to television current affairs.

Which programmes could be considered 'exemplary' in the treatment of immigration? Why could they be considered exemplary? Are these types of shows common on the stations that broadcast in Catalonia? These are the questions the article by Ingrid Guardiola, entitled "Invitations to Reconciliation: Immigration Through Local and Autonomous Community Informative Programmes" attempts to answer. The author presents a selection of programmes and posits them as samples of innovative spaces not just in terms of format but in the way the content is articulated, even if the shows do not fit well in general-interest station programming schedules, where they are conspicuous by their absence.

Following the now-consolidated tradition of CAC studies on the treatment of immigration in the media, we also include a study by Laura Rodas entitled "The Treatment of Immigration in 2005 News Shows" which was prepared on the basis of figures collected by the CAC's Technical Services Department of referring to social and political pluralism. On this occasion, the author extracted all the news stories related to immigration to devote a specific analysis to the issue. The figures that appear in this article come from a sample which includes the Catalan lunchtime and evening news bulletins of TV3, K3/33, TVE in Catalunya, and the news shows of the local stations BTV, Citytv and Localia between 1 January and 31 December 2005. The descriptive conclusions, of great empirical interest, respond to questions about the amount of time dedicated, the people the stories discussed and the people given speaking time.

Finally, but no less importantly, the issue ends with an ambitious article on the international contextualisation of institutional and professional experiences in the field of broadcasting diversity. Doris Boira, from the previously mentioned Round Table on Diversity, explains it in the article "Approximation on Broadcasting Experiences of Cultural Diversity and Immigration in Europe and Canada", which focuses only on public stations and does not include private or community ones. Using diverse criteria, she selected the following European countries as well as Canada: Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. A review of the history of the

relationship between immigration and the broadcasting situations in diverse national contexts allows readers to discover a rich range of experiences relating to the treatment of cultural diversity. Each country has a history of migration and each station has developed a certain type of programming on the basis of its political and broadcasting framework. A comparison of the present situation with the historic trajectory in the countries examined makes it possible to find similar and different aspects of great interest in broadcasting policies, programming and the multicultural media.



## Notes

- 1 It is a good idea to here recall a selection of references relating to the 'cultivation hypothesis' school, focused on the television representation of minorities: D. Atkin, "An Analysis of Television Series with Minority-lead Characters", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 9, 1992; G. Gerbner & N. Signorelli, *Women and Minorities in Television Drama 1969-1978*, Philadelphia, Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, 1979; B. Greenberg (ed.), *Life on Television: Content Analysis of U.S. TV Drama*, Norwood, Ablex, 1980; D.E. Mastro & B. S. Greenberg, "The Portrayal of Racial Minorities on Prime Time Television", *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 44 (4), 2000; W. Potter & I. Chang, "Television Exposure Measures and the Cultivation Hypothesis", *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 34, 1990.
- 2 See *Quaderns del CAC*, no. 12, January-April 2002. The specific articles corresponded to the three speeches presented at the first congress on "The News Treatment of Immigration" called by the CAC on 27 and 28 November 2001. The speakers were Vicenç Villatoro ("The Media and Immigration: The Responsibility of Reporting, the Responsibility of Coexisting"), José A. Sorolla ("The News Treatment of Immigration in Catalonia") and Xavier Giró ("Comments on the Journalism Style Manual Relating to Ethnic Minorities and New Proposals").
- 3 See the following studies: CAC (Technical Services), *La imatge de les minories ètniques a les televisions de Catalunya*, Barcelona: CAC, 1999; Bolado, A.C., Brucet, C., Medina, J.M., Onghena, Y., *La imatge del Magrib a les televisions de Catalunya*. Barcelona: CAC, 1999; CAC and the Centre for African Studies, *La imatge de l'Àfrica negra a les televisions*, Barcelona: CAC, 1999; Rodríguez, S., Porras S., *El tractament del poble gitano a les televisions de Catalunya*, Barcelona: CAC, 1999; Rodrigo Alsina, M., Martínez Nicolás, M., "Minories ètniques i premsa europea d'èlit" in Anàlisi. *Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura*, 20, 1997, pp. 13-36; MIGRACOM, "Tractament de la immigració no comunitària als mitjans de comunicació (premsa, ràdio i televisió) a Catalunya, Bellaterra: UAB, 1996.
- 4 Some references on European research about communication and immigration: Bodas, J. and Dragoevich, A., *El mundo árabe y su imagen en los medios*, Madrid: Comunica, 1994; Frachon, C, i Vargaftig, M., *European Television: Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities*, London: John Libbey, 1995; Harold Riggins, S., *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective*, London: Sage, 1992; Simon, R.J., Alexander, S.H., *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion and Immigration*, Westport: Praeger, 1993; Van Dijk, T., *Racismo y análisis crítico de los medios*, Barcelona: Paidós, 1997. Applied research work into television and immigration include studies promoted by the CSA in France and the ITC in Britain; see: Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, *Présence et représentations des minorités visibles à la télévision française*, Paris: CSA, 2000; Independent Television Commission, *Ethnic Minorities on Television*. [Http://www.itc.org.uk](http://www.itc.org.uk); Independent Television Commission, *Television: Ethnic Minorities' Views*. [Http://www.it.org.uk](http://www.it.org.uk).
- 5 See David L. Altheide, *Creating Reality: How TV News Distorts Events*, Beverly Hills-London, Sage, 1976; Gaye Tuchman, *Making News*, New York, Free Press, 1978; Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979; Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980; Doris A. Graber, *Crime News and the Public*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1980; W. Lance Bennet, *The Politics of Illusion*, White Plains (N.Y.), Longman, 1983; Philip Schlesinger, *Putting 'Reality' Together*, London, Methuen, 1987.
- 6 The importance of research on television carried out between 1978 and the present by the Italian RAI broadcaster's VQPT (Verifica Qualitativa Programmi Trasmessi) service is unique in Europe. In early 2005, the number of studies published came to 198. Some of them tackled the relationship between television and the construction of images of immigration (e.g., C. Marletti, *Televisione e Islam. Immagini e stereotipi dell'Islam nella comunicazione italiana*, Roma, RAI-ERI, 1995).

- 7 Buonanno, M. *El Drama televisivo, identidad y contenidos*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 1999; *Eurofiction 1997. Primo rapporto sulla fiction in Europa*, Rome, RAI-ERI, 1998. The author has led the realisation and publication of 16 consecutive reports to date on "La fiction italiana. L'Italia nella fiction"; the latter with the title *Lontano nel tempo. La fiction italiana. L'Italia nella fiction*, Rome, RAI-ERI, 2005.
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- 9 See particularly Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1987; Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1991; Maxwell McCombs, Donald L. Shaw, David Weaver (eds.), *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-Setting*, Mahwah (N.J.), Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997; Maxwell McCombs, *Setting the Agenda. The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, Cambridge (UK)-Malden (MA), Polity, 2004.
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- 12 The group of student participants were 4th-year ESO (obligatory secondary education) students from Josep Tapiró High (Reus), 1st-year higher-certificate students from Solc School (Barcelona), 1st-year higher-certificate students from Sant Ignasi School (Barcelona); 1st-year ESO students from Ramon de Berenguer High (Santa Coloma de Gramenet) and 1st-year higher-certificate students from Celestí Bellera High (Granollers).
- 13 The project "Television and the Construction of a Public Image of Immigration in Spain" was awarded a PGC-MCYT grant from Spain's Ministry for Science and Technology in the 2001 official announcement (BSO2001-0938) and was led by the UNICA consolidated group from Pompeu Fabra University, under the direction of head researcher Dr. Josep Gifreu.